

generally in the Service, seems to us, and is frankly confessed by the majority of the witnesses we have examined to be defective in the highest degree. It affords no sufficient guarantee of fitness for the discharge of the duties of office. It embarrasses Ministers in providing an efficient public service, and it causes great and often irresistible pressure to be brought on Members of Parliament to force their consent to the nomination and appointment of unfit persons. It has, we think, a mischievous effect on the public mind in making the desire for offices too strong an impulse in political conduct; for while the higher offices of State are the laudable and legitimate objects of the ambition of statesmen, the scramble for a paltry patronage and for the smaller offices of the Service, cannot but have a bad effect alike on those who exercise and those who enjoy such patronage.

23. Notwithstanding the reluctance of witnesses to commit themselves to any specific statements as to the inefficiency of their subordinates, there is sufficient in their general statements on that subject to justify the conclusion that the Service is susceptible of very great improvement and that there have been many appointments to it of persons whose habits, lack of educational acquirements, or inaptitude for business could not fail to produce a state of affairs fully justifying most of the propositions stated in the reference to the Commission. But, apart from any specific statements made in the evidence, we find in its general tenor and in what we have ourselves observed, abundant reasons for the conclusions that the Service requires reform and that it has not been sufficiently guarded against the evil effects of political patronage.

24. To this baneful influence, we believe, may be traced nearly all that demands change. It is responsible for admission to the Service of those who are too old to be efficient; of those whose impaired health and enfeebled constitutions forbids the hope that they can ever become useful public servants; of those whose personal habits are an equally fatal objection; of those whose lack of education should disqualify them; and of those whose mental qualities are of an order that has made it impossible for them to succeed in private business. It is responsible too for the appointment of those who desire to lead an easy and, what they deem, a genteel life.

To the same influence may be ascribed most of the appointments of men taken from beyond the Service to the best places over the heads of tried and efficient servants: and it may fairly be charged with all the discontent and demoralization arising out of the feeling, justified by bitter experience, that a faithful and zealous performance of duty establishes no sure claim to the prizes of the Service, which, as is abundantly shewn by the evidence, are too often carried off by persons whose claim to office is mainly founded on the political service they have rendered to their party. These observations, we may add, apply with greater force to the Outside as compared with the Inside Service, in which there is but little chance of advancement or increase of pay. To this class of appointments and the consequent removal of the chief incentive to zeal may perhaps be attributed more than to any other single cause, the languid interest which many of the public servants feel in the performance of their duties. They have but little motive for more than the most perfunctory performance of their work, because they feel they are in that way as likely to gain promotion as by the most active performance of it; and that should a vacancy occur above them,